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High-Level Guidance for the Meeting Policy of the IETF

Abstract

This document describes a meeting location policy for the IETF and the various stakeholders required to realize this policy.

Status of This Memo

This memo documents an Internet Best Current Practice.

This document is a product of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). It represents the consensus of the IETF community. It has received public review and has been approved for publication by the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG). Further information on BCPs is available in Section 2 of RFC 7841.

Information about the current status of this document, any errata, and how to provide feedback on it may be obtained at <https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8719>.

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1. Introduction

The work of the IETF is primarily conducted on working group (WG) mailing lists, while face-to-face WG meetings mainly provide a high-bandwidth mechanism for working out unresolved issues. The IETF currently strives to have a 1-1-1 meeting policy where the goal is to

distribute the meetings equally between North America, Europe, and Asia (see "Meeting Location Distribution" (slides 14 and 15) of [IETFMEET] for details). These are the locations from which most of the IETF participants have come in the recent past. This meeting rotation is mainly aimed at distributing the travel effort for the existing IETF participants who physically attend meetings and for distributing the timezone difficulty for those who participate remotely. This policy has been neither defined precisely nor documented in an IETF consensus document until now. This BCP RFC is meant to serve as a consensus-backed statement of this policy.

2. The 1-1-1-* Meeting Policy

Given that the majority of the current meeting participants come from North America, Europe, and Asia [CONT-DIST], the IETF policy is that the meetings should primarily be held in those regions. That is, the meeting policy (let's call this the "1-1-1" policy) is that meetings should rotate between North America, Europe, and Asia. Note that the boundaries between those regions have been purposefully left undefined. It is important to note that such rotation and any effects to distributing travel pain should be considered from a long-term perspective. While a potential cycle in an IETF year may be a meeting in North America in March, a meeting in Europe in July, and a meeting in Asia on November, the 1-1-1 policy does not imply such a cycle, as long as the distribution to these regions over multiple years is roughly equal. There are many reasons why meetings might be distributed differently in a given year. Meeting locations in subsequent years should seek to rebalance the distribution, if possible.

While this meeting rotation caters to the current set of IETF participants, it is important to recognize that due to the dynamic and evolving nature of participation, there may be significant changes to the regions that provide a major share of participants in the future. Therefore, the 1-1-1-* meeting policy is a slightly modified version of the aforementioned 1-1-1 meeting policy that allows for additional flexibility in the form of an exploratory meeting (denoted with an "*"). Exploratory meetings can be used to experiment with exceptional meetings without extensively impacting the regular meetings. For example, these exploratory meetings can include meetings in other geographical regions, virtual meetings, and additional meetings beyond the three regular meetings in a calendar year.

The timing and frequency of future exploratory meetings will be based on IETF consensus as determined by the IETF chair. Once a meeting proposal is initiated, the IESG will make a decision in consultation with the IETF Administrative Support Activity (IASA) [RFC8711] to ensure that the proposal can be realistically implemented. The final decision will be communicated back to the community to ensure that there is adequate opportunity to comment.

| NOTE: There have not been a large number of meetings that would
| qualify as exploratory meetings under the 1-1-1 policy (with
| IETF 95 in Buenos Aires and IETF 47 in Adelaide being the
| exceptional instances). IETF 27 (Amsterdam) and IETF 54
| (Yokohama) were earlier examples of exploratory meetings that
| pioneered Europe and Asia as regular IETF destinations.

3. Implementation of the Policy

IASA should understand the policy written in this document to be the aspiration of the IETF community. Similarly, any exploratory meeting decisions will also be communicated to the IASA to be implemented. The actual selection of the venue would be performed by the IASA following the process described in [RFC8718].

As mentioned in [RFC8718], the IASA will also be responsible for the following:

- * assisting the community in the development of detailed meeting criteria that are feasible and implementable, and
- * providing sufficient transparency in a timely manner concerning planned meetings so that community feedback can be collected and acted upon.

Given that the geographical location of the venue has a significant influence on the venue selection process, it needs to be considered at the same level as the other Important Criteria specified in Section 3.2 of [RFC8718] (including potentially trading-off the geographical region to meet other criteria and notifying the community if the geographical region requirement cannot be met).

4. Procedure for Initiating Proposals for Exploratory Meetings

Someone who is interested in pursuing an exploratory venue proposes it on the IETF discussion list or on a future discussion list expressly set up and announced for this purpose. The community gets to comment on the venue and offer their opinions. If the IETF chair determines that there is community consensus to pursue the venue further, the venue will be put up for discussion on the venue-selection mailing list <<https://www.ietf.org/mailman/listinfo/venue-selection>>. This would allow the interested party(ies) to refine their proposal based on insightful feedback regarding the logistics of the venue from those tasked with evaluating it. Once the venue selection process takes place, the final decision will be communicated back to the community to ensure that there is adequate opportunity to comment.

5. Re-evaluation and Changes to This Policy

Given the dynamic nature of participant distribution in the IETF, it is expected that this policy will need to be periodically evaluated and revised to ensure that the stated goals continue to be met. The criteria that are to be met need to be agreed upon by the community prior to initiating a revision of this document (e.g., try to mirror draft author distribution over the preceding five years).

6. References

6.1. Normative References

[RFC8711] Haberman, B., Hall, J., and J. Livingood, "Structure of the IETF Administrative Support Activity, Version 2.0", BCP 101, RFC 8711, DOI 10.17487/RFC8711, February 2020, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8711>>.

6.2. Informative References

[CONT-DIST] IETF, "Number of attendees per continent across meetings", <<https://datatracker.ietf.org/stats/meeting/continent/>>.

[IETFMEET] Hinden, B. and R. Pelletier, "IAOC Report IETF79", November 2010, <<https://www.ietf.org/proceedings/79/slides/plenaryw-3.pdf>>.

[RFC8718] Lear, E., Ed., "IETF Plenary Meeting Venue Selection Process", BCP 226, RFC 8718, DOI 10.17487/RFC8718, February 2020, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8718>>.

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